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ABSTRACT

This paper describes a practicum that was designed to increase the efficacy of assistant principals as members of an administrative team in a learning organization. The 1-year practicum took place at a grades 8 to 12 public school facility in a rural community. The problems facing the school principal, who designed the practicum were that the two assistant principals did not possess a clear understanding of their job description and did not have leadership skills at a level required for the job. The paper provides an investigation into existing literature concerning these issues and discusses solution strategies as described by this literature. Four specific expected outcomes are developed: (1) assistant principals need to become more active participants in the development of their own job descriptions; (2) assistant principals need to become more active participants in regional meetings and initiatives; (3) improved principal-assistant principals communication is needed to enhance knowledge of school operations; and (4) collegial collaboration is needed to obtain professional efficacy. The paper not only explains how solutions were selected and how outcomes were measured, but also provides weekly action reports taken over a 3-month period. The results show that all the desired outcome goals were met. The results of this practicum will have a direct effect on the 1998-99 school year. (Contains 38 references.) (RIB)

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Increasing the Professional Efficacy of Secondary School
Assistant Principals through the Process of
Collegial Collaboration

by
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Cluster 82

A Practicum I Report Presented to the Ed. D. Program
in Child and Youth Studies in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Education

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Abstract

Increasing the Professional Efficacy of Secondary School Assistant Principals through the Process of Collegial Collaboration. Harris, J. Robert, -1998: Practicum Report, Nova Southeastern University, Ed. D. Program in Child and Youth Studies. Assistant Principal/School Administrator/ School Improvement/School Leadership and Development/Mentorship and Change/ Learning Organization/Professional Efficacy/Assistant Principal Roles and Responsibilities/Administrative Collaboration

This practicum was designed to increase the professional efficacy of assistant principals as members of a learning organization working collaboratively in the context of the collegial, administrative team.

The writer developed four outcomes for the practicum: a) assistant principals participating in the development of their own job descriptions, b) assistant principals becoming more active participants in regional meetings and initiatives, c) improved principal-assistant principal communication leading to enhanced knowledge of school operations and issues, and d) the attainment of professional efficacy through the process of collegial collaboration.

Analysis of the data revealed that assistant principals respond well to full and open communication with the principal, specificity of job description with categorization of job functions, participation in system discussions and initiatives, and mentorship exercised by a principal who exhibits collegial behaviors.

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Chapter I: Introduction

Description of Community

The community in which the practicum took place was a publicly-funded secondary school which opened in 1952. The school was located in a small village situated in an agricultural valley. The rural community served by the school covered a geographical area of approximately 250 to 300 square miles.

The primary economic base of the area was farming and industry, and the socio-economic levels served by the school ran from extremely poor to wealthy. The estimated population of the village in which the school was situated was 500 people; the population served by the school was approximately 8,000 people.

During the year of the Practicum, the student body consisted of 920 students. There were 55 teachers at the school, with 20 support staff and five custodians. The school was situated on a campus of 28 acres, and was comprised of one, large, physical structure that housed all of its students and staff. The exterior property of the school consisted of two playing fields, an excellent track, one, large storage shed, and several parking areas.

Writer's Work Setting

The school was a grades 8 to 12 public school facility that operated under the jurisdiction of a medium-sized regional school board. The mission of the school was to provide a safe, healthy, inclusive environment that permitted and promoted the development of skills and dispositions necessary for literacy, computation, civic responsibility, and life-long learning.

The school was either unique or unusual in several ways. It served the only First Nations community in the valley, a site of several hundred acres near the

school. Also, the school was one of only four schools under the jurisdiction of the Board with a secondary student population of between 900 and 1,100 students and a teaching population in excess of 50 teachers. The school had the most extensive physical education facilities of any school in the region; also, it had the largest and best equipped cafeteria in the region.

Significant in the school's history was that its first School Advisory Council became legally constituted during the autumn of the 1997-1998 school year.

There were other special features of the school. Its student government organization handled approximately \$125,000.00 per year, affording students the power to plan for and achieve many student activities. Its Occupational Health and Safety Committee represented a growing source of constructive concern among both professional and non-professional staff in the school; the committee also represented a growing number of students who were nervous about their diminishing energy levels when in school, a condition that seemed to be caused by sick building syndrome.

As a result of government restructuring of school boards and early retirement incentives, the teaching staff of the school was a transitional blend of people within five to eight years of retirement and beginning teachers. This staff served, in an inclusive setting, a diverse population of grades 8 to 12 students who ranged from severely challenged to university preparatory. The relatively large, vocal staff began to flex its collective strength during the 1997-1998 school year because, for two years, there had been serious health issues that seemed connected to the school's environment and air-handling systems, and expressions of staff members' concerns seemed to produce neither better physical nor

environmental working conditions. Among the staff, many made regular, conscientious contributions to their field, and 15 members of the teaching staff during the 1997-1998 school year were engaged in writing curriculum projects, either at the school level, for the province's Department of Education, or at the request of the regional board.

Over many years, there had been disagreements among an opinionated group of secretaries who were unclear about their responsibilities; two secretaries were replaced during the early spring of 1998, and, at that time, secretarial responsibilities were clarified. There were three distinct, non-professional groups, namely, educational assistants, cafeteria employees, and custodians, who were hard-working, conscientious, and loyal to the school.

The school had two assistant principals, one who had been at the school for two years and one who had been at the school for one year, both of whom served with a soon-to-retire principal who had held the position for the last three years of his career, and who did not share information, job descriptions, or power with the assistant principals.

Writer's Role

The writer was the principal of a secondary school of 920 students. He held the following degrees: Bachelor of Arts with Honors in English, Bachelor of Education in Secondary Teaching Methods, Master of Arts in English with a specialty in American Poetry of the 20th Century, and Master of Education in School Administration. The writer had his school administration certification. The writer, certified to teach grades kindergarten to 12, had taught senior high school English for seven years, had been a guidance counselor for two years, a Supervisor of

Curriculum for two years, and had been a high school principal for 12 years. In addition, the writer had been an adjunct professor in the School of Education at the local university for 15 years, and, periodically, had supervised student teachers in the field.

In his work as a school administrator, the writer had both legal and positional responsibilities. Legally, the writer was responsible for the implementation of the public school program of the Province of Nova Scotia's Department of Education as well as adherence to provincial and regional board policies. The writer was responsible for the tracking of pupil attendance, maintenance of a safe and effective learning environment, management and oversight of all school financial operations and activities. The writer was accountable for the school's performance to the Board via the Superintendent of Schools, and was required to cooperate with the Department of Education in its various mandates and initiatives. The writer was responsible in a positional capacity for many aspects of school operation, especially the facilitation of clear communication among – and effective participation by – the school's various stakeholders in representative processes of decision-making for the school. The writer was responsible for the identification, selection, and evaluation of teaching staff and non-teaching staff under the oversight of the Director of Human Resources. Responsibilities also included generation and implementation of professional development programs for staff under the oversight of the Director of Programs. Moreover, the writer was responsible for communication with parents, and the establishment of an effective, functioning, school advisory council.

The writer had direct supervisory responsibility for two assistant principals, one designated as the grades 8, 9 assistant principal, and the other designated as the 10, 11, and 12 assistant principal.

In relation to the practicum the writer was concerned with the development of clear job descriptions, focused knowledge base, and empowerment of the assistant principals; the writer was responsible for formulating collegial strategies to help the assistant principals with their stated goals of functioning effectively and becoming more efficacious in their work. The writer's responsibility in relation to the practicum was to serve as a mentor to help the assistant principals develop a sense of clarity, direction, and self-assured competence in, and a sense of satisfaction with, their jobs as assistant principals.

Chapter II: Study of the Problem

Problem Statement

The problem to be solved in this practicum was that the assistant principals who work with the writer did not possess the amount of explicit knowledge, clarity of job description, and empowerment needed and requested by the assistant principals, themselves, and by the Director of Human Resources of the Regional School Board.

Problem Description

During the tenure of their current positions, and prior to the implementation of this practicum, the assistant principals worked without job descriptions, experienced ambiguity with regard to explicit knowledge that helps assistant principals to function effectively, and worked without opportunities to experience collegial, professional growth. Prior to the current school year, one assistant principal was employed at the school for two years, the other for one year; both assistant principals worked without formally stated job descriptions. The assistant principals experienced uncertainty with regard to their roles, responsibilities, and professional growth and development. The assistant principals worked without explicit knowledge of Regional School Board expectations in relation to their roles. Furthermore, the assistant principals were not coached towards empowerment; this resulted in the assistant principals experiencing uncertainty from the perspective that their jobs seemed to offer neither learning opportunities nor a workplace setting in which there was a collegial approach to collaborative problem-solving.

Problem Documentation

The existence of the problem was first mentioned when the writer was being interviewed for his current position. Therefore, evidence of the problem was made available before the writer accepted his current position when, during the writer's interview, the Director of Human Resources of the board that employs the writer made it clear that there were concerns associated with the assistant principals, their functioning, and their job descriptions. The method of collecting the data was the writer inferring from the Director of Human Resources, in the interview process, that the Director had as one of his concerns the status of the assistant principals in relation to non-existent, but needed, job descriptions.

During a debriefing meeting after the writer had been hired as principal, the Director stated directly he was aware that the assistant principals were in need of encouragement, information, and opportunities to participate in regional meetings as part of their job function. As evidence of how seriously the Director of Human Resources perceived the problem to be, he agreed to give the writer out-of-the-building in-service time to mentor the assistant principals. The method of data collection involved the writer being told by the Director of Human Resources that he wanted the writer to give leadership to the assistant principals, provide them with needed information, and assist them with clarifying their roles, particularly with regard to their involvement in regional meetings and initiatives.

During their first meeting with the writer the assistant principals provided verbal evidence of the problem's existence. With regard to being uninformed concerning basic, essential matters, the conversation of the assistant principals exhibited numerous instances of, "We don't know;" and "We were never advised

about that;" and "The previous principal did not usually mention that." The method of data collection was an interview of the assistant principals by the writer.

In order to clarify concerns in preparation for three administrators to begin working together for the first time, the writer requested the assistant principals to write memos, independently of each other, in which they could articulate their concerns for the coming year and beyond. Both assistant principals stated that they hoped to have opportunities for professional growth and development under the leadership of their new principal. The assistant principals both wrote of frustration with regard to receiving neither specific knowledge nor clear direction in the form of collegial leadership from the previous principal. The method used to collect this data was the writer's request that the assistant principals express key concerns in writing.

Causative Analysis

During their brief, initial time serving as assistant principals (one year for one, two years for the other), several work-related features caused the assistant principals to experience a sense of uncertainty caused by not having job descriptions, by not having specific job-related knowledge, by being in need of more collegial professional development and professional contact with the principal, and by feeling excluded from a sense of real leadership and empowerment.

In the first place, the assistant principals worked with minimal direction and without written job descriptions. The writer asked to see the assistant principals' job descriptions, but the assistant principals made it clear that they did not have, and had never had, written job descriptions. When the writer discovered that the

assistant principals were working without written job descriptions, he asked that the assistant principals outline in writing the tasks they had been doing. The result of the investigation revealed that under the previous principal the assistant principals dealt chiefly with student discipline. The senior high school assistant principal stated in a memo to the writer that, under the previous principal, he spent a minimum of two-thirds of his time on discipline, with the rest of his time being spent on organization of school events, getting substitute teachers, and scheduling. The middle/junior high assistant principal stated that, in addition to spending most of her time on student discipline, on several occasions her disciplinary decisions were countermanded by the former principal.

The assistant principals made it clear to the writer that they did not know what was going on in the school board region. The writer inquired of the assistant principals how often they usually went to regional meetings for administrators and discovered that they were not regular participants at regional meetings for administrators. Further investigation revealed that the assistant principals were not given notices of regional administrative meetings by the previous principal. The writer inquired of the secretary to the previous principal concerning the process for distribution of faxes and memos from the school board's regional office, discovering that all such documents were given directly to the previous principal, and the writer was advised that only one copy of any sort of notice of meeting went to the schools, it being the responsibility of each school site to make duplicate copies of notices that went to the principal. The writer specifically asked the assistant principals if they regularly received copies of faxes and memos from the school board's regional office. They stated that under the former principal, they

frequently did not receive documents from central office that pertained to the middle school or high school. The results of the writer's investigation revealed that a major cause of the assistant principals not regularly attending regional meetings for administrators was that the assistant principals were not informed of regional administrative meetings and therefore could not participate fully in regional initiatives.

The assistant principals stated that they required participatory, professional development support from the current principal because they wanted to overcome a sense of devaluation experienced in the past. The cause of this sense of being devalued was that they were rarely consulted in the past with regard to decisions that were school-wide in scope. Another cause of expressed concern for the assistant principals was that they did not want to view their positions as "last stops". Both assistant principals stated that they want to learn more about the job of principal in order to be eligible to apply in the future for principalships. Upon investigating further the cause of the assistant principals' sense of being devalued, the writer was told by members of staff that they experienced a strong sense of isolation as a result of minimal, meaningful communication with the previous principal. As a result of his investigation, the writer learned and confirmed that there was a major gap in communication and shared decision-making between the assistant principals and the previous principal because he excluded others, including his assistant principals, from participating in collegial, collaborative process.

The assistant principals stated that they wanted to be regarded as members of an administrative team, working collaboratively as learners and problem-solvers

rather than in a state of isolated exclusion. The writer inquired of the assistant principals what sort of meaningful teamwork they had shared with the previous principal, and they both stated that they had experienced an absence of meaningful collaboration with the previous principal. The writer further investigated this concern and discovered from members of staff that the previous principal had spent most of his time alone in his office with the door closed. The result of the investigation made it clear that the assistant principals expected improved communication, support from the principal, and inclusion in the school's administrative leadership team.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

Literature researched with reference to the role of the assistant principal produced insights into several relevant topics, including assistant principal job descriptions, assistant principal roles and responsibilities, assistant principals as leaders, the adequacy of assistant principal training, assistant principal efficacy, and the need by assistant principals for mentorship.

A review of the literature made it clear that the role of the assistant principal has many aspects and that assistant principals perform many tasks. Indeed, assistant principals typically fulfill many roles, including disciplinarian, manager, instructional leader, crisis manager, attendance keeper, scheduler, and numerous other tasks totaling from 15 to 30 identifiable sets of duties, making it difficult for assistant principals to focus on any one aspect of school administration. For example, the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP, 1991) presented inventories of assistant principal tasks ranging from teacher supervision through issues associated with student control to interagency liaison, curriculum

support for teachers, and public relations. Hill (1994) enumerated 15 major elements in the job descriptions of assistant principals, including program instruction, discipline, student attendance tracking, budget, and assigned duties. Michel (1996) referred to the numerous responsibilities of the assistant principal and observed that the tasks are so abundant that they make it difficult for the assistant principal to engage in leadership activities. Hartzell (1993) listed 20 common duties of assistant principals, most of them having to do with activities such as discipline, scheduling, and organizing. Marshall (1991) provided a comprehensive list of 30 administrative duties of assistant principals and ranked those duties, showing similarities and discrepancies over a 22 year period, from 1965 to 1987. Scoggins & Bishop (1993) noted 20 duties of assistant principals, and questioned the likelihood that any one person could do all of them. Calabrese (1991) listed nine areas of responsibility of effective assistant principals, and suggested that the job is the most demanding one in contemporary school systems.

Assistant principals frequently experience uncertainty and conflict in their roles, or, as it is variously referred to in the literature, role ambiguity, role dilemma, or role conflict. Marshall (1991) commented on the lack of well-defined job descriptions available for assistant principals. Glanz (1994) drew attention to the conflict inherent in a role that mandates hierarchical, supervisory efficiency on the one hand, and provides genuine instructional assistance to colleagues, on the other. Porter (1996) questioned what the role of the assistant principal really is, and suggested that the status quo must be altered so that the worth of the job of assistant principal can be highlighted to support the work of schools. Hartzell, G.

N., Williams, R. C., & Nelson, K. T. (1995) noted the frustration experienced by assistant principals when teachers think they should be able to handle any situation. Michel, G. J., Cason, W. F., Jennings, J. J., Palmer, R. L., & Pressley, S. (1993) observed that the traditional view of the role assistant principals was and is to fulfill any responsibility required. Calabrese (1991) characterized the assistant principal's role as being multi-dimensional.

There are writers who have focused on the need to restructure the role of the assistant principal to cause the position to become more attractive to potential candidates, and to help its practitioners become better trained. NASSP (1991) noted that the role of assistant principal must emerge, through support and professional development, to an enhanced status. Daresh (1997) declared that education administration programs must be upgraded to place more emphasis on leadership and reflective development if the preparation of school administrators is to improve. Williams (1995) argued that the role of assistant principal has changed dramatically since the 1920's, and posited, furthermore, that the role must become one where the assistant principal is regarded as a member of a leadership team. Clemons (1989) observed that the trend is toward the transition of the role of the assistant principal from subordinate to a more highly regarded status that involves leadership.

Assistant principals require professional development to assist them in their progress towards empowerment. Daresh (1997) asserted that both the content and the delivery of programs that prepare individuals for critical educational roles such as principal need to be improved, and this has a direct bearing on the role and education of aspiring leaders such as assistant principals. NASSP (1991) put forth

the argument that the role of the assistant principal continues to emerge and that assistant principals require support to improve professionally. Hartzell (1993) asserted that university programs designed to help prepare assistant principals need to better reflect the realities of the job. Hannay (1992) described the Principal Plus Program for professional development of administrators in five Ontario school boards and noted how the program was associated with contemporary findings having to do with facilitating change. Hannay & Bissegger (1993) went on to outline how the Principal Plus Program implemented in the same Ontario school boards brought forth incremental professional development in the area of transformational leadership.

The literature was consistent in proposing that assistant principals should have available to them the coaching they require to help them develop identifiable skills and practices that can aid them in the provision of effective leadership. NASSP (1991) argued that each school district had to establish comprehensive professional development strategies to help assistant principals improve their skills. Hartzell, et. al. (1995) noted that many assistant principals must cope with job responsibilities for which they had no training; the identification of skills needed by assistant principals should not always be perceived as identical to the skills needed by principals. Marshall (1991) sketched 11 professional development features that would help educational leaders become transformational and more sensitive to equity issues. Epp (1993) reported that new principals often are selected because they have developed certain desirable strengths in special skill areas such as people skills or sports knowledge or child-centered approaches; these skills must be developed if assistant principals are to be regarded as persons ready to be

selected as principals. Storey & Zellinsky (1993) observed that first-time administrators require certain skills, including networking, and that women administrators, in particular, need to develop skills to deal effectively with stereotyping and discrimination. Cronin (1993) articulated 14 qualities such as vision, stamina, and powers of concentration that educational leaders have to develop because they are fundamental to the practice of leadership.

Writers in the field of the role of assistant principal have provided evidence that the problem exists in many settings. A noteworthy and prevailing source of evidence that the problem exists in a variety of settings is the frequent discussion of the role of assistant principal as too ill-defined and unclear. NASSP (1991) summarized the plight of the assistant principal by noting that the job has numerous, qualitative levels of what is presumed of the person in the role, such as expected, assigned, assumed, expanded, situational, logistical, leadership-oriented, and managerial. Hartzell et. al. (1995) presented self-descriptions in which assistant principals reported being overwhelmed and feeling unable to cope because of the job's volume, meaning quantity and diversity of tasks. Hartzell, G. N., Williams, R. C., & Nelson, K. T. (1994) described the loneliness of the position in conjunction with the noted deficiencies of support in providing assistant principals with good background information.

Some writers provided evidence that the problem exists in other settings by chronicling the experience of assistant principals. Marshall (1991) discussed the selection and socialization of two assistant principals; one, a male, struggled to be patient while waiting for a principalship, even though his assistant principal's job began to wear him down; the other, a female, eventually found herself looking for

another position because of her constant inclination to challenge her principal and implement change when it was not possible to do so effectively. Hartzell, et. al., (1995) engaged in conversations, both formal and informal, with 90 assistant principals, capturing and subsequently sketching their anxieties, their frustrations, and their sense of being limited by their positional circumstances involving staff conflict, drug abuse among students, discipline problems, and the difficulties associated with having neither the time nor the mandate to focus on worthwhile projects.

The literature put forward a number of causes of the problem. One continuing cause was insufficient research and writing with regard to the assistant principalship. NASSP (1991) commented on the paucity of literature and research on the assistant principalship. Marshall (1991) indicated that the assistant principalship has been ignored and that hers was the first book to focus on the position.

The literature identified a cause of problem as the increasing range of responsibility faced by assistant principals. Clemons (1989) noted that as more responsibility is placed with principals, it is necessarily the case that more responsibility is given to assistant principals. Calabrese (1991) referred to the array of personal qualities the assistant principal needs to possess in order to deal with the plethora of demands associated with a multidimensional role. Porter (1996) commented on the near universal scope of responsibilities of the assistant principal which require that the inherent worth of the position be questioned. Golanda (1991) stated that a major cause of inefficacy among assistant principals is directly attributable to the role's being ill-conceived and not well defined.

A cause of assistant principal confusion and disenchantment discussed in the literature is that assistant principals sometimes step into their position without proper training and support. Michel (1996) observed that most assistant principals are poorly trained to take up the administrative responsibilities with which they are charged. Marshall (1991) declared that great humanists, such as Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr., would not have survived the assistant principalship if they had received the training typical of most assistant principals.

Another cause of the problem identified in the literature is what some writers called a lack of socialization of the assistant principal. Ginty (1995) reported that new administrators are typically not socialized with regard to being helped to anticipate or prepare for changes in status with colleagues, work roles, routines, sense of self, health, and the need for new systems of support. Michel (1996) advised that persons assuming assistant principalships are socialized neither from the perspective of how others viewed them nor in the context of how change will alter the role in the 21st century. Koru (1993) noted that the socialization experienced by most assistant principals does not prepare them for their future roles as principals, even though most assistant principals seek the job because they view it as a stepping-stone to the principalship.

The literature indicated that a cause of the problem is ineffective communication. Hosack (1994) reported on the need to examine communication among high school assistant principals in order to improve administrative team effectiveness. Cantwell (1993) described clear communication between most principals and assistant principals as being either not present or not dependable.

According to the literature, feelings of inadequacy and ineffectiveness can cause assistant principals to view their job roles as having too many constraints; consequently, some assistant principals report negative self-perceptions in relation to their careers. Marshall (1991) noted that assistant principals can feel as if they should leave careers that no longer seem to be providing a sense of having a future. Marshall (1993) characterized the role of assistant principal as being unappreciated. Hartzell (1995) noted that assistant principals tend to lose enthusiasm for work that has to do for the most part with handling disturbances rather than with the development of long range plans, thus causing them to perceive their jobs as having insufficient worth.

A feature reported in the literature is that a lack of job satisfaction can prompt assistant principals to doubt the value of their work and thus cause their performance to be, or to be perceived as, ineffective. Sutter (1996) noted that if the assistant principals view their ability utilization as being low, then they feel they are not performing with efficacy in their jobs. Golanda (1991) argued that assistant principals can become so frustrated with a sense of being unappreciated and overworked that they can actually suffer a loss of skills. Cantwell (1993) noted that assistant principals can feel powerless and isolated when compared to principals, causing assistant principals to lose efficacy because they feel alienated from other administrators, teachers, and district educators.

A summary of the literature supported a strong relationship between the problem and the writer's work setting. The literature (NASSP, 1991; Hill, 1994; Michel, 1996; Hartzell, 1993; Marshall, 1991; Scoggins & Bishop, 1993;

Calabrese, 1991) made it clear that assistant principals have an abundance of tasks. The writer's work setting revealed that assistant principals perform many jobs.

The literature (Marshall, 1991; Glanz, 1994; Porter, 1996; Hartzell, et. al., 1995; Michel, et. al., 1993; Calabrese, 1991) highlighted the role ambiguity or role dilemma or role conflict experienced by assistant principals. The Director of Human Resources, supervising the writer's work setting from a personnel perspective, indicated that the assistant principals in the writer's work setting experienced role ambiguity. The assistant principals in the writer's work setting stated to the writer that their jobs caused them a sense of role conflict.

The literature (NASSP, 1991; Daresh, 1997; Williams, 1995; Clemons, 1989) recommended that the job of assistant principal be restructured. One of the assistant principals in the writer's work setting expressed to the writer his discontent with the way that the assistant principal's job tends to be structured. Both assistant principals who report to the writer expressed an interest in realigning their duties so that both have curriculum oversight assignments that range through all the grade levels.

The literature (Daresh, 1997; NASSP, 1991; Hartzell, 1993; Hannay, 1992; Hannay & Bissegger, 1993) supported the idea that assistant principals need opportunities to develop their skills. The assistant principals in the writer's work setting expressed an interest in working with the writer to develop their skills and to work collegially to identify and plan professional development opportunities.

The literature (NASSP, 1991; Hartzell, et. al., 1995; Marshall, 1991; Epp, 1993; Storey & Zellinsky, 1993; Cronin, 1993) indicated that assistant principals can require coaching, particularly with regard to matters of developing and

exercising leadership skills. Both of the assistant principals in the writer's work setting made after-the-incident remarks to the writer such as "I didn't handle that too well, did I?" and mid-incident remarks such as "What do you think I should do?" Both assistant principals in the writer's work setting had and continue to have leadership roles that contribute to the work milieu.

The literature (Marshall, C., Rogers, D., & Steele, J., 1993; Lemley, 1997) established the importance of assistant principals needing to exhibit beliefs having to do with social values and ethical caring. The assistant principals in the writer's work setting have displayed and continue to exhibit a strong commitment to community and social values combined with ethical caring.

The literature (Monsour, 1998; Lemley, 1997; Daresh, 1997; Riordan & Hildebrandt, 1995) expressed the view that assistant principals require the opportunity to experience collaborative leadership in a mentoring context to participate more dynamically in constructive change towards school improvement. In the writer's work setting the assistant principals indicated their interest in the collaborative process with the writer serving as mentor. The Director of Human Resources has made it clear that in the past the assistant principals in the writer's work setting expressed a need for an opportunity to engage in collaborative leadership.

The literature (Richardson & Flanigan, 1991; NASSP, 1991; Hickman & Treslan, 1994; Hartzell, et. al., 1995) indicated that assistant principals require more pre-service and in-service training. The assistant principals in the writer's work setting both have Master of Education degrees with an emphasis in education administration and have a solid theoretical background in this area of study. Both

assistant principals in the writer's work setting expressed an interest in participating in in-service skill development with the writer to improve their experience of leadership and sense of personal efficacy.

The literature (NASSP, 1991; Hartzell, et. al., 1995) indicated that assistant principals require supervisory oversight and support. The Director of Human Resources to whom the writer reports observed that the assistant principals in the writer's work setting required oversight and support. The assistant principals in the writer's work setting indicated their willingness to receive supervisory support from the writer.

The literature (Ginty, 1995; Michel, 1996; Koru, 1993; Sutter, 1996; Golanda, 1991; Cantwell, 1993) stated that features of assistant principals' work include a sense of socialization as well as of alienation and isolation depending on the preparation, constraints, and level of appreciation for their efforts; further, if enough negativity pertains to the job, assistant principals experience inefficacy, and they can actually give signs of losing skills. The assistant principals in the work setting employed under the writer's supervision reported mixed levels of socialization and alienation. Although the assistant principals in the work setting commented on personal efficacy being hard to maintain, they did not give clear indication of loss of job skill.

The literature (Hosack, 1994; Cantwell, 1993) indicated that poor communication among members of an administrative team, and particularly between principals and assistant principals, can reduce the effectiveness of the team. The writer, after only a few months in his current work place, noticed, because of the magnitude of administrative responsibilities, that it was difficult to

sustain appropriate levels of communication with the assistant principals. The assistant principals in the work place stated that they want to see an improvement in work setting communication.

The literature (Daresh, 1997; Ginty, 1995; Riordan & Hildebrandt, 1995; Calabrese & Tucker-Ladd, 1991) indicated the importance of on-the-job mentoring of assistant principals and the obligation of experienced administrators to fulfill the role of mentor in order to build a sense of professional growth among school-based administrators. The Director of Human Resources to whom the writer reports indicated his expectation that the writer engage in mentoring activity with his assistant principals. The assistant principals in the writer's work setting made it clear that they anticipated mentorship from the writer.

The scope of the literature review was limited by several factors. The scope of the literature surveyed was confined to the years 1987-1997, to maintain a list of sources ten years old, or less; one 1998 reference was used. The scope of the literature review for the most part was limited to texts and journal articles that dealt directly with the role and job-functions of assistant principals. Exceptions to limiting the scope of the literature review to the role and job functions of the assistant principal were those selected items that focused on aspects of leadership qualities in principal selection, mentorship, team building for collaborative problem-solving in schools, school improvement and collegial learning; for this reason, some of the literature reviewed applies only to the solution of the problem, and also, for legal reasons, The Education Act and Regulations Under the Act for the Province of Nova Scotia had to be included in the writer's references, since school administrative positions are referred to in these documents. In examining

literature with a view towards school improvement, the writer explored selected items that dealt with maintaining values, cohesion, and leadership in and through the change process.

Chapter III: Anticipated Outcomes and Evaluation Instruments

Goals and Expectations

The goal of the practicum was to have the assistant principals who work under the writer's supervision experience day to day professional efficacy and job satisfaction in the context of collegial collaboration.

Expected Outcomes

There were four outcomes projected for this practicum:

1. The assistant principals will achieve clear certainty of written job descriptions and roles applicable to their work setting. This outcome will be measured by the amount of congruence in the levels of acceptance of the job descriptions developed by the assistant principals themselves, the writer, and the Director of Human Resources for the board that is the employer.
2. The assistant principals will become knowledgeable of, and participatory in, regional meetings and initiatives. This outcome will be measured by the assistant principals keeping a log of the number of meetings open to them, and appraising the number and value of those meetings.
3. The assistant principals will experience consistently opportunities for meaningful information from, and clear communication with, the writer. This outcome will be measured by the assistant principals keeping a log of information items and topics provided by the principal and assessing the value of that information.
4. The assistant principals will experience that their leadership is valued by the principal, that they are learners, and that they work as efficacious members of a collaborative leadership team mentored by the writer. This outcome will be

measured by a 20-item questionnaire employing a 5-range Likert Scale prepared by the writer.

Measurement of Outcomes

For the first outcome, success was to be demonstrated by congruence among the two assistant principals, the writer, and the Director of Human Resources in acceptance of the descriptions of jobs and roles, and by the filing of these descriptions in the office of the Director of Human Resources and in personnel files of the assistant principals. The literature provided many discussions that illustrated the demanding and diverse nature of assistant principals' job functions. Prior to their involvement in this practicum project, the assistant principals felt that there were many demands placed upon them, just as the literature suggested; however, they did not have systematic categorizations of their duties. An essential feature of this outcome was the full participation of the assistant principals in the development of their job descriptions. Their participation in the process toward the achievement of agreement and consensus among the assistant principals and the writer was a major reason for the identification of "congruence" among the assistant principals and the writer. "Congruence" was chosen as a descriptor of success in the development of job descriptions – the instrument in this case – to ensure that the job descriptions, once developed, would have lasting value and meaning for the assistant principals and help remove ambiguity from their day to day work experience. Total success was to be demonstrated should the assistant principal job descriptions, once developed, become models for assistant principals of secondary schools throughout the region. This standard was selected because acceptance by the Director of Human

Resources of the job descriptions as having regional value would cause the instrument to have value beyond one specific work site and result in their usefulness extending to a more wide-ranging applicability.

The second outcome was to be measured by means of an assistant principal's log in which each assistant principal was to keep track of the number of meetings open to him or her, the number of meetings they attended, and stating "yes" or "no" as to whether or not their participation had value for them (see Appendix A – Assistant Principal Meeting Log). A standard of performance for this outcome was the assistant principals attending two-thirds or more of the regional meetings available to them and stating that, more than half the time, they believed that their attendance was an appropriate use of their time. The reason for this form of measurement was to offer the assistant principals a self-monitoring means of recording and assessing their participation as system administrators in system initiatives and system events. This way the assistant principals could more accurately take responsibility for their own participation in, contributions to, and knowledge base concerning regional events, policy discussions, and events.

Measurement of the third outcome was to be accomplished by having the assistant principals maintain a log of information items and topics provided by the principal. In the past, the assistant principals reported feeling excluded by the principal from information, communication, and topics of importance; this compared very directly with reports by assistant principals in the literature concerning feelings of inadequacy and ineffectiveness caused by unclear, inconsistent, undependable, and non-occurring communication between the principal and his or her assistants. The maintenance of communications logs as an

instrument in measuring this outcome gave the assistant principals the opportunity to both and assess whether they received more abundant and more useful communication from the principal than has been the case in the past. A standard of performance in this regard was to be the appraisal of a written a log kept by the assistant principals in which the assistant principals evaluated the quantity of information received from the principal and described its usefulness to them in a range of 1) waste of time, 2) not useful, 3) useful, 4) very useful, and 5) essential (see Appendix B); if a minimum of half the entries in the log were rated at "3" or more, then the communication was to be viewed as satisfactory. The results of the assessment performed by the assistant principals were to be analyzed to determine if some sorts of information were consistently more important than other sorts on the one to five scale. At the end of the practicum implementation period, the assistant principals were to provide brief, written responses to five questions that served to appraise their experience of communication with the principal and that requested their recommendations for improvement (see Appendix C). The reasons for using a combination of communications logs and open ended questions was to ensure that assistant principals could, themselves, track and appraise the level of communication occurring between themselves and the principal and to determine if the communication had improved in quantity and quality, and had contributed to their level of awareness.

The fourth outcome was to be measured by a questionnaire prepared by the writer (see Appendix D). This 20-item questionnaire employed a 5-range Likert Scale. The passing standard of performance on a five-point 20-item scale would be " $3 \times 20 = 60$ " by each assistant principal; a satisfactory standard of performance in

the case of this practicum was " $3.5 \times 20 = 70$ " by each assistant principal, with at least half of the items receiving ratings of 3 or above. This instrument was developed to give a concrete set of reference points to a set of abstract concepts – collaborative professional efficacy – that otherwise might be difficult to process in meaningful terms. The use of a questionnaire applied in conjunction with a simple mathematical measurement, served to make abstract information more accessible, useful, and applicable in determining focus areas for follow-up beyond the time-frame of the practicum.

Chapter IV: Solution Strategy

Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions

The problem to be addressed in this practicum was that the assistant principals who work with the writer did not possess the amount of explicit knowledge, clarity of job description, and empowerment that was needed and requested by the assistant principals, themselves, and by the Director of Human Resources of the Regional School Board.

The literature provided discussions leading towards solutions relevant to the creation of job descriptions for assistant principals, and to the generation of strategies toward assistant principal empowerment and renewal.

Descriptions in the literature of activities typically carried out by assistant principals served as a basis for considering roles and developing job descriptions of assistant principals (NASSP, 1991; Koru, 1993; Hill, 1994; Michel, 1996; Richardson & Flanigan, 1991; Hartzell, 1993; Marshall, 1991; Scoggins & Bishop, 1993; Calabrese, 1991). The solution strategies provided by the literature, such as scheduling, student discipline, teacher evaluation, and coordinating of curriculum served both as base-line material on which to build, and as a departure point, in the context of current experience, from which to develop job descriptions and roles for the assistant principals.

The literature provided recognition of the diversity, complexity, and confusion of the role of assistant principal (Porter, 1996; Hartzell et. al., 1995; Glanz, 1994; Michel, et. al., 1993; Calabrese, 1991; Marshall, 1991; Golanda, 1991). This aspect the literature offered limited usefulness towards the development of a solution strategy. It expanded the theme that the role of the

assistant principal is complex and diverse, but it did not add significantly to the solving of the problem, and it did not sharpen the focus of the discussion. Consequently, minimal reference was made to this portion of the literature since it did not enhance clarity of focus towards constructive problem-solving.

A solution strategy suggested by the literature was for assistant principals to perceive and exhibit a commitment to the promotion of a sense of community and social values, particularly the behavior of ethical caring (Marshall, C., et. al., 1993; Lemley, 1997). The literature thus stated that people training to be administrators must move beyond traditional models of value-neutral, apolitical leadership and that career assistant principals should learn to link values associated with caring to other aspects of leadership, placing an emphasis on morals, ethics, and values. While this solution strategy had merit, as it did not directly tackle the problem of assistant principal effectiveness, it was not be used by the writer in a strategic sense.

A solution strategy described in the literature was the restructuring of the role of assistant principal as a professional who assumes high profile tasks in the school and in the district (NASSP, 1991; Daresh, 1997; Williams, 1995; Cantwell, 1993; Hartzell, 1993; Clemons, 1989); for example and significantly, assistant principals can assume staff leadership functions and can participate in school district initiatives. The solution strategies suggested by the literature in this area have merit and require thoughtful examination that can lead to selective application of concepts. The writer made use of concepts put forth in the literature having to do with the restructuring of the assistant principal's role, in consultation with the assistant principals, with regard to district-level participation.

Writers commenting on the assistant principalship promoted the solution of assistant principals being given the opportunity to improve in job function through the use of cohesive team building and the employment of collaborative leadership in a mentoring context; thus assistant principals could be given the opportunity to participate in constructive change leading to the development of decision-making skills required for school improvement. Such literature reflected similar themes, such as a) producing ease of transition from one job to the next, thus improving the profession (Monsour, 1998), b) focusing in the training of candidates on life, change, and building relationships (Lemley, 1997), and c) having people who aspire to be leaders form communities of learners (Daresh, 1997). Further, expanding on the literature's theme of collaboration, one writer celebrated the benefits of a mentorship program in Alberta, Canada, that caused assistant principals to feel they had improved their overall level of competence (Hildebrandt, 1995). Another writer outlined eight ways to build a collaborative approach to problem-solving. Ten steps useful in building a learning-organization approach to collegial collaboration have also been presented (Kline & Saunders, 1993). The writer used the strategies indicated by the literature in this case because they had a direct bearing on the concept of building effectiveness through shared, collaborative learning.

A basic solution strategy was to have the assistant principals identify aspects of physical plant and school operations with which they were not familiar and orient them in a collegial manner at regular meetings with both physical plant and current and evolving issues. The literature supported this solution strategy, offering an array of insights (Daresh, 1997; NASSP, 1991; Hartzell, 1993; Hannay, 1992;

Hannay & Bissegger, 1993; Riordan & Hildebrandt, 1995; Calabrese & Tucker-Ladd, 1991; Storey & Zellinsky, 1993; Marshall, 1991; Epp, 1993; Williams, 1995; Calabrese, 1991; Hill, 1994). For example, there was the collegial development, with the assistant principals, of an understanding of basic aspects of school operations (such as emergency evacuation procedures, the location of air handling equipment, and issues that evolve that require a knowledge of basic policy). The writer made use of the information supplied in the literature with regard to knowledge development of assistant principals.

A solution strategy set forth in the literature was the examination and improvement of inter-administrator communication (Hosack, 1994; Cantwell, 1993). This strategy had the positive potential of helping to build administrative team cohesion, particularly with regard to the sharing of information and ways to improve in-school communication, and therefore was adopted by the writer.

A solution strategy put forward by the literature was the need to create better professional development and training programs and opportunities (Richardson & Flanigan, 1991; NASSP, 1991; Hartzell, et. al., 1994; Hickman & Treslan, 1994; Hartzell et. al., 1995). This solution strategy focused on the responsibilities of university departments of education and school boards to provide better training for assistant principals. This solution was not appropriate to the current situation because its magnitude was beyond the scope of the writer and the project.

A very rigorous solution strategy put forward by the literature was the improvement of assistant principals' performance by means of having them experience demanding, extensive, field practicums under close supervision that

gave indication of candidates' potential for the role of assistant principal, this regimen followed by strict on-the-job supervisory support from the principal (NASSP, 1991; Hartzell, et. al., 1995). It was argued that this process would yield authentic evidence of a person's readiness for the assistant principalship. The first segment of this solution strategy was beyond the scope of the writer, while the second segment conflicted with the collegial approach that the writer intended to take.

A solution strategy suggested in the literature involved the merits of having experienced administrators mentor aspiring leaders (Daresh, 1997; Ginty, 1995; Riordan & Hildebrandt, 1995; Calabrese & Tucker-Ladd, 1991). This strategy focused on the responsibility of seasoned professionals to perceive, examine, and respond in a mentoring manner to the growth needs of assistant principals. This solution strategy was used by the writer as it coincided with the writer's own beliefs and sense of responsibility to mentor his assistant principals.

A solution strategy provided by the literature was to have assistant principals reflect on and engage in personal skill assessment and development (Daresh, 1997; NASSP, 1991; Hartzell, 1993; Hannay, 1992; Hannay & Bissegger, 1993). This strategy, based in self-directed behavior, offered support to self-aware assistant principals possessing an interest in continuous self-improvement. This solution strategy, in a sense, preceded the current project, because the problem was in part perceived and reported to the Director of Human Resources of the board that employs the writer as a result of assistant principal self-reflection. Self-reflection, already a practice exhibited by the assistant principals, continued to be encouraged by the writer.

A major set of interrelated and overlapping solution strategies had to do with collaborative mentorship. One focus was concerned with on-the-job mentoring of assistant principals by experienced administrators (Daresh, 1997; Ginty, 1995; Riordan & Hildebrandt, 1995; Calabrese & Tucker-Ladd, 1991). This focus made effective use of the perception, skills, and talents of school-based personnel towards shared professional growth. Another focus offered by the literature was the provision to assistant principals of opportunities for collaborative leadership in a mentoring context (Monsour, 1998; Lemley, 1997; Daresh, 1997; Riordan & Hildebrandt, 1995). This strategic focus engaged assistant principals as colleagues rather than as underlings in the opportunity to practice leadership with a principal.

The literature supported the idea that assistant principals would benefit from introduction to and participation in collaborative processes of empowerment leading to cohesive and collegial team-functioning and enfranchisement (Lemley, 1997; Daresh, 1997; Herald-Taylor, 1995; Ginty, 1995; Shantz, 1993; Hosack, 1994; Kline & Saunders, 1993). This solution strategy had great merit because it approached the problem from a vantage point of contemporary leadership theory, establishing the process of guided participation and communication towards collaborative problem-solving, resulting in shared ownership for the best possible consequences. The writer made use of this strategy by developing collaboratively with the assistant principals a list of job areas in which they wished to be mentored and providing opportunities for mentorship in those areas with the support of the Director of Human Resources. Areas to be reviewed included topics such as allocation of staff assignments,

describing support staff responsibilities, and making recommendations to Central Office on issues of importance with regard to school safety.

Description of Selected Solutions

The solution that the writer implemented in order to help his assistant principals work towards a higher degree of job efficacy had four components, namely, a) the development of job descriptions, b) the utilization of improved communications among administrators with regard to regional meetings and initiatives, c) the collegial orientation of the assistant principals towards increased familiarity with basic sorts of knowledge and currently evolving issues by means of better work-place communications and regular consultation, and d) utilization of collaborative processes towards empowerment leading to cohesive team leadership that solves problems. It was anticipated that these solutions would function synergistically towards providing a solution to the problem.

In the first instance, role ambiguity can inhibit effectiveness. It was anticipated that assistant principals would function with increased certitude and satisfaction if they had job descriptions. The writer started with this solution because it was a logical place to begin the process of establishing a sense of security and self-assurance for the assistant principals, while, at the same time, satisfying a major concern of the Director of Human Resources; moreover, there was abundant support available from the literature in this area.

Literature on the assistant principal discussed the restructuring of the role. This emphasis connected strongly with the solution strategy to improve communication with the assistant principals with regard to regional meetings and initiatives. The writer conferred regularly with, and supported, the assistant

principals with regard to their participation in regional, system-wide focus groups and committees. Follow-up ensued between the assistant principals and the writer with regard to issues and concerns generated by these meetings. While it might seem natural that assistant principals would be aware of all aspects of physical plant and operating procedures, such an assumption was misguided. Assistant principals required the opportunity to learn the location of features of the physical plant and the property, and how to deal with matters of standard procedure and evolving issues. They and the school benefited, as well, from having the opportunity to be consulted on such matters and to offer their suggestions for better ways to serve students and teachers. In addition, discussions of ways in which the writer could help the assistant principals achieve their goals were held. A key element of this strategy was to hold regular in-school meetings with the assistant principals to ensure that there developed a routine for school-based communications that focused on their concerns.

A major element in addressing the practicum problem was the development of a collaborative leadership approach to problem-solving with the assistant principals functioning as full partners in a leadership team with a mentoring principal. This solution was accompanied by achievable strategies and was both practicable and doable, supported by the literature, and within the scope and authority of the writer. The solution met the criteria developed out of an analysis of the problem and the work setting; it was achieved in the implementation time frame of the practicum. The solution met the needs of the assistant principals as set out in the problem.

The solution consisted of descriptive, procedural and behavioral changes that were essential and vital for the assistant principals to work in a more collaborative manner. Indeed, active collaboration was the key to this solution, and it was achieved by means of planned times when dialogues were held and short-, medium-, and long-term concerns were identified, discussed, and plans were formulated; the conscious, formal process of attending to this solution helped the assistant principals to build collegial patterns with each other and the writer, and helped them to provide leadership to the staff.

The assistant principals had experienced uncertainty of roles and duties. They benefited from participating in the development of their own written job descriptions because the process resulted in a sense of ownership of those job descriptions.

The assistant principals were encouraged to participate in regional meetings and initiatives. They needed to be knowledgeable with regard to system events and participate in system-level dialogues. The assistant principals were not always content with leaving their school-based assignments; however, they became more aware of system initiatives stemming from system involvement.

The assistant principals had expressed a need for more and better communication with their principal, and they wanted to experience an improvement in work place communication among administrators. The assistant principals were given a regular flow of information and were proactively engaged in meaningful dialogue by the principal with regard to major school decisions in the areas of safety, curriculum planning, school organizational, staff development,

allocation of resources, public relations, and discussions that focused on plans for school improvement.

The assistant principals had reported to both the Director of Human Resources and the writer that their effectiveness was diminished by working in a state of isolation in which they had neither direction from, nor an invitation to participate in, important planning procedures by the former principal. The assistant principals required a greater degree of involvement and participation with the principal. The assistant principals experienced a collegial approach to collaborative teamwork, shared learning, problem-solving, and decision-making that provided them with the opportunities to experience working as members of a team.

There was a strong relationship between solution strategies and projected outcomes. There existed a marked relationship between the strategy of examining what leading writers call restructuring the role of the assistant principal, on the one hand, and, on the other, creating job descriptions with assistant principals. There was a solid relationship between the strategy of participating in regional meetings and initiatives and proactively contributing to one's own in-school effectiveness; knowing what was being planned for the system as a whole and being perceived as a participant and leader in system discussions and initiatives enhanced the assistant principals' sense of themselves as staff leaders. The development of a process of improved communication procedures through regular meetings and more conscious efforts to share information among administrators enabled assistant principals to be more informed, effective, and better able to provide leadership to the staff. A key strategy was to establish workplace priorities through collegial

approaches; this was directly linked to the outcome of achieving of professional collaboration by a team of problem-solvers.

Report of Action Taken

The Director of Human Resources of the board and the assistant principals, themselves, were the people who originally brought the problem to light, making it clear from the outset as to why the project was being undertaken, and this very much facilitated the beginning of the implementation process. Moreover, since the writer served also as the principal of the school where the practicum took place, and since the assistant principals and Director of Human Resources wanted the problem addressed, permission to implement the plan was not a concern; this meant that the first aspects of implementation involved explanation to establish clarity and build trust. Explanation, clarity, and trust were crucial because the writer was in his first year as principal, he was working with assistant principals who already had experience at the school, and, considering substantial nature of the overall goal of the project, the implementation period was not extensive.

Week one involved explaining the implementation process to the participants. This was taken care of in a full day meeting that was held off school premises with the approval of the Director of Human Resources. In the meeting, the writer explained to the assistant principals the scope and the 12-week time frame of the practicum project. They were advised of the procedures that would be followed and what their roles would be in terms of providing information that would help evaluate the practicum. The writer explained that he would be engaging the assistant principals as partners in communication. He further explained that he would assume the role of mentor, and, in keeping with the goal

of the practicum, work with the assistant principals to pursue a collaborative approach to problem-solving in a learning organization.

In week two of the implementation the writer discussed job descriptions with each assistant principal separately and ask each of them to start a rough draft of a job description. Also, in keeping with a process approach, each assistant principal was asked to reflect on how administrative duties were distributed among the three administrators. In addition, the assistant principals were given their communication log sheets so that they could keep track of communications from the writer. Meeting log sheets were also be given out at this time so that the assistant principals could keep a tally of regional meetings that were brought to their attention. A list of future meeting dates were be scheduled.

The primary focus of week three was discussions of basic operations and procedures. Fundamental aspects of school board policy and school management were reviewed. The assistant principals were given opportunities to get clarification on a range of topics and issues that had not been reviewed with them before. This examination of fundamental issues served as background as the assistant principals worked on their job descriptions. As the assistant principals were given opportunities to identify in a focused manner the school-based activities and projects in and for which they had concern, they came to be more cognizant of the magnitude of their responsibilities and how wide-ranging their supervisory were interests really were.

Originally, it had been intended that week three would involve a full-day, out-of-the-building meeting in which job descriptions were the main topic of focus. However, this off-campus meeting did not take place because of heavy schedules

causing time constraints among the three school administrators involved in the project. Instead, draft descriptions begun by the assistant principals were discussed briefly in the writer's office to be further reviewed in week four. At the week three conference, the writer presented inventories from the literature (NASSP, 1991; Hill, 1994; Michel, 1996; Hartzell, 1993; Marshall, 1991; Scoggins & Bishop, 1993; Calabrese, 1991) of assistant principal tasks, behaviors, and responsibilities, and these were discussed in relation to what the assistant principals had been preparing. The process had the positive effect of giving work a context. Through the creation of individual job inventories, the assistant principals began to make statements that sounded less like they were overwhelmed and more as though they were impressed that they could successfully do so much.

The fourth week focused more closely on assistant principal job descriptions. A discussion was held to consider if and how some of the administrative responsibilities in the school might be realigned, and if such realignment was, indeed, considered desirable. During week four as well, the writer engaged each assistant principal in dialogue with regard to regional meetings attended as well as in-school communication, emphasizing the importance of the two logs (meetings and communication) that each assistant principal was maintaining.

During week five, job descriptions were to have been finalized with copies being prepared for the Director of Human Resources. Finalizing of job descriptions, it became clear, was going to take longer than expected for four reasons: a) one assistant principal was dealing with confidential, personal issues that were slowing down progress; b) the Director of Human Resources had entered a period of intense activity with regard to contract negotiations and was not available for a

meeting at this time; c) the assistant principals, one middle/junior and one senior, were noting that their jobs had many more administrative similarities than differences; and d) the assistant principals and the writer were reaching the conclusion that it was going to be preferable to write job descriptions that had common headings and descriptors for purposes of dealing with school wide and staff concerns. Such internal consistency, it was decided, would accomplish three things: a) it would help the three administrators to function as a team in which there was ongoing support for each other; b) it would provide more stability with staff; and c) it would help make the job descriptions more generic and comprehensive, reflecting the reality of each week's work.

In addition during week five, the assistant principals were asked to discuss their observations on in-school communications and initiatives in which they were interested. The writer met separately with each assistant principal to focus on ways in which he might be of mentoring support to each of them with regard to their professional effectiveness. In one case, the writer was able to be of support in a personal way; in the other case, the writer was able to discuss and find financial support for the assistant principal to attend a special conference.

During the sixth week of implementation the writer spoke with the Director of Human Resources to get his appraisal of the direction take towards comprehensive and generic assistant principal job descriptions, and he gave his support for a job rationalization approach. Also, during week six, the writer discussed with the assistant principals aspects of operations and procedures to determine if the assistant principals required support identifying and working on selected supervisory projects. One assistant principal commented that he was

attempting to get accustomed to the amount of information. At the beginning of week six the writer took each assistant principal on a "walkabout" tour of the facility and the 28-acre campus, and, surprisingly, there were places, both inside and out, that they had not been before.

The writer placed an emphasis on communications concerning out-of-school meetings and initiatives during week seven, inquiring if there were any system initiatives in which the assistant principals wanted to participate. Also, the job descriptions prepared by the assistant principals were reviewed by the writer and returned to the assistant principals for their further amendment.

In the eighth week, the writer inquired of the assistant principals regarding the areas in which they wanted mentoring. The key area for both was budgets, for although both of them have specific responsibilities for textbook orders, neither has acquaintance with site based global budgeting; since the school year was heading into exams and yearend closing activities at this point, it was agreed that the school budgeting process would constitute an excellent initial focus for formal mentoring once the school year was underway in the autumn.

During week nine the focus was on consequences resulting from assistant principal participation in regional meetings and initiatives. The assistant principals received support from the writer regarding their attendance of these meetings because, although important, the assistant principals had difficulty wanting to leave the school, and had a tendency to question the value of spending time at these meetings.

Week ten did not develop as planned. It had been intended during week ten that the writer would meet with each assistant principal separately to examine

issues that would require ongoing mentorship by the writer, and that these individual meetings would be followed by a day-long out-of-the-building meeting to review the collaborative process that had been developing among the three administrators. Instead, the assistant principals and the writer had to remain in the building because schedules would not permit an off campus meeting. This change of the schedule did not reduce effectiveness of the meetings, and one appropriate recommendation devolved from the rescheduling, namely, that such meetings be held regularly the next year in the middle/junior wing of the building. In addition, discussions revealed the shared perception that the collaborative process had become a natural mode of behavior among the three administrators, sustainable despite the pressures from work, stress, and the insistent demands of working in a very busy grades eight to 12 school. The collaborative process still required conscious maintenance with formal procedures to sustain it. It was agreed that the high level of communication that had been established would serve as a cornerstone for collaboration in the future.

During week 10 as well, job descriptions were agreed upon, using a set of agreed upon headings, and, following a common format, submitted to the Director of Human Resources, who communicated preliminary approval.

In week eleven, evaluation instruments were given to the assistant principals for completion; their few questions were answered.

At the end of week 12, communication logs, meeting logs, and completed evaluation instruments were collected. The writer met individually with each assistant principal, and privately with the Director of Human Resources the following week to review the results of the practicum. No ambiguities requiring

evaluation were found in the evaluation instruments. Plans were discussed for follow-through in the next school year for the writer to continue to provide support for the assistant principals in their identification of, and action on, priorities. This discussion, very positive in its tone, set the stage for continued collegial collaboration to be outlined prior to the beginning of the next school year.

Chapter V: Results

Results

The problem that existed in the writer's work setting was that the assistant principals who work with the writer did not possess the amount of explicit knowledge, clarity of job description, and empowerment that they needed. This perception was first brought to the attention of the writer when he was being interviewed for his position, and it became even more clear during the writer's initial discussions with the assistant principals when he first went to his new position. During those discussions, the writer asked the assistant principals to write, independently of each other, what their job concerns were, and it was clear from both their written accounts and verbal utterances that they enjoyed little, if any, sense of professional efficacy.

In consequential response to the problem, the goal of the practicum was to have the assistant principals who work under the writer's supervision experience day to day professional efficacy and job satisfaction in the context of collegial collaboration.

The goal of the practicum project had four concomitant outcomes. It was projected that:

1. The assistant principals will achieve clear certainty of written job descriptions and roles applicable to their work setting.

This outcome was met (see Appendix E).

This outcome was measured by the amount of congruence in the levels of acceptance of the job descriptions developed by the assistant principals themselves, the writer, and the Director of Human Resources for the Board that is

the employer. The writer provided numerous inventories of assistant principal job tasks and met with the assistant principals frequently as they worked on their job descriptions. In conjunction with the overall intent of the practicum, the development of the assistant principal job descriptions was a process that involved the assistant principals directly, with them co-authoring and approving fully of the final version that was delivered to the Director of Human Resources. The Director of Human Resources wrote the writer on 20 July 1998 to state that he had not only received the assistant principal job descriptions but that he would use them as a "start point" in the preparation of job classifications as part of the Board's strategic plan for 1998-1999 (see Appendix F). For these reasons it may be stated that the job descriptions were met with affirmative congruence by the assistant principals, themselves, the Director of Human Resources, and the writer.

2. The assistant principals will become knowledgeable of, and participatory in, regional meetings and initiatives.

This outcome was met.

This outcome will be measured by the assistant principals keeping a log of the number of meetings open to them, and appraising the number and value of those meetings (see Appendix A). During the previous year, the assistant principals had, according to self-reports, attended few meetings. During the 12 week practicum, the logs maintained by the assistant principals revealed a high level of attendance at meetings.

The middle/junior assistant principal was aware of 34 meetings. Of these meetings, 20 were held in the school, the middle/junior assistant principal attended 18 of them, and appraised all 18 of them as being "worth attending." Of

the 14 meetings held out of school, the middle/junior assistant principal attended 10, and of the 10, appraised eight of them as "worth it," and one of these eight as "very frustrating." The middle/junior assistant principal appraised two of the out of school meetings as "not worth it." This exceeded the stated standard described in Chapter III, page 26 of this practicum report. Verbal reports from the middle/junior assistant principal made clear that although more meetings were attended than in the past, it was very frustrating to be taken away from other aspects of administrative responsibilities so frequently, even if such meetings were worthwhile.

During the 12 week practicum, the senior assistant principal was aware of 43 meetings. Of these meetings, 26 were held in school, and the senior assistant principal attended 25 of them, describing all 25 in school meetings attended as "worth it." Of the 17 out of school meetings that the senior assistant principal was aware of, 12 were attended, and the senior assistant appraised nine of them as "worth it." This met the stated standard described in Chapter III, page 26 of this practicum report. Verbal reports from the senior assistant principal made clear that there were many more meanings to be aware of than in the previous year; furthermore, more meetings were attended than in the past. Although all the in school meetings were regarded as very useful, the out of school meetings did not receive uniform, positive regard. Similar to middle/junior assistant principal, the senior assistant principal asserted that it was very frustrating to be taken away from other administrative responsibilities so frequently, even when the meetings were worthwhile.

3. The assistant principals will experience consistently opportunities for meaningful information from, and clear communication with, the writer.

This outcome was met.

Both assistant principals maintained logs in which communications from the principal were recorded, described according to topic, and appraised on a Likert Scale ranging from "1 – waste of time" to "5 – essential" (see Appendix B). Also, each assistant principal responded independently and in writing to five open-ended questions (see Appendix C). These questions were worded to elicit from the assistant principals appraisals concerning a) the quantity of communication from the principal, b) information from the principal concerning regional meetings and initiatives, c) quality of communication of from the principal, d) communication with the principal in the context of assistant principals initiating communication with the principal, and e) their recommendations for improving communication between themselves and the principal.

The middle/junior assistant principal's 12-week log indicated 42 communications from the principal. Of these, one was rated as "2 – not useful," 11 were rated as "3 – useful," 15 were rated as "4 – very useful," and 15 were rated as "5 – essential."

The senior assistant principal's 12-week log indicated 69 communications from the principal. Of these, one was rated as "2 – not useful," seven were rated as "3 – useful," 18 were rated as "4 – very useful," and 43 were rated as "5 – essential."

In each of their respective responses to the five, open-ended questions, each assistant principal indicated that there was a) more communication from the

principal, b) improved communications from the principal with regard to regional meetings and initiatives, c) improved quality of communication from the principal, d) greater opportunity to initiate communication with the principal, and e) a few recommendations with regard to improvement of administrative communication, and the comment that it has required some adjustment to become accustomed to the volume of communication that came to be the norm during the 12-week practicum, and which the assistant principals have indicated should continue.

4. The assistant principals will experience that their leadership is valued by the principal, that they are learners, and that they work as efficacious members of a collaborative leadership team mentored by the writer.

This outcome was met.

This outcome was measured by means of the assistant principals completing a 20-item questionnaire employing a 5-point range Likert Scale prepared by the writer (see Appendix D). The questionnaire was designed to be a summative instrument that appraised each assistant principal's self-described movement towards efficacy by responding to statements with "1 – not at all," "2 – slightly," "3 – moderately," "4 – very much," and "5 – greatly." An average of "3" X 20 items would have resulted in a total of 60 on the questionnaire. The writer had stipulated that a satisfactory response-level would be an average of "3.5" X 20 items resulting in a total of 70 on the questionnaire. The best possible response would have been 100. One assistant principal's response level was 92 and the other's response was 98. All responses were at the "4 – very much" or "5 – greatly" level except for one response by one assistant principal at the "3 – moderately" level.

Discussion

The goal of the practicum that "the assistant principals who work under the writer's supervision experience day today professional efficacy and job satisfaction in the context of collegial collaboration" was achieved in all respects and the outcomes were met.

Outcome number one pertained to job descriptions (Appendix E). The assistant principal job descriptions that were agreed upon reflect the numerous responsibilities that assistant principals typically perform, as the literature makes clear (NASSP, 1991; Hill, 1994; Michel, 1996; Hartzell, 1993; Marshall, 1991; Scoggins & Bishop, 1993; Calabrese, 1991). The literature (NASSP, 1991; Daresh, 1997; Williams, 1995; Clemons, 1989) makes mention of the need to restructure the role of the assistant principal, and the descriptions that were developed help make sense of the wide-ranging nature of assistant principal responsibilities by organizing tasks under headings and into categories. Each description employs the same headings, namely, "Staff Leadership," "Program Services and Management," "School Organization," "Student Services," "Public Relations," "Regional Liaison," and "Principal Support." Importantly, each assistant principal wanted to be recognized as a curriculum leader in the school, and the job descriptions recognize this need in the "Program Services and Management" section. The job descriptions reflect each other, providing a fair balance of shared responsibility.

The job descriptions were prepared, with the writer serving as mentor, in a collegial manner with the full, collaborative participation of the assistant principals. The literature provides strong, logical support for this approach (Monsour, 1998;

Lemley, 1997; Daresh, 1997; Ginty, 1995; Riordan & Hildebrandt, 1995; Calabrese & Tucker-Ladd, 1991). Furthermore, the job descriptions conclude with a brief belief statement entitled "Preparation for the Principalship" that emphasizes the team approach to school administration, declaring that "administrators contribute to and benefit from the synergy that is derived from collaboration and collegial leadership."

Outcome number two emphasized the importance of assistant principals being aware of and participating more fully in regional meetings and initiatives. The meeting logs maintained by the assistant principals indicate that they were made aware of and attended a very large number of meetings. The open-ended question, "b," dealing with communication (see Appendix C) asked, "Compared to one year ago, is it your impression that communications from the principal notifying/inviting/encouraging/asking you to participate in regional events/initiatives have been more numerous?" In response to this question, one assistant principal responded, "Definitely. I am always made aware of committees, panels, in-services, et cetera, and encouraged to attend so that our school is well represented. It is gratifying to know that these events are happening and to receive all appropriate supporting documents when one does attend." The other assistant principal reported that the principal, "knowing my professional interests and professional pursuits to make the school a better place to be, has sought out conferences and workshops which would assist me in my professional development. He has discussed and encouraged my participation in committees at the local level and has acted as a facilitator to make both myself and the other assistant principal feel part of the school and the system." This same assistant

principal generated the practicum's one unexpected outcome. The assistant principal experienced a variety of personal, non-work related difficulties that were eroding his motivation. As part of the same discussion already quoted, he observed that the writer's "manner and professional and personal concern have assisted me in making career choices to remain in administration and not return to the classroom. His style of leadership and positive contributions are the basis for my decision to 1) stay at _____ and 2) in administration." This outcome, though unexpected, is perhaps the most rewarding of all.

The focus of outcome number three was to increase and improve communication among the administrators, a major concern for the assistant principals that is supported by the literature (Hosack, 1994; and Cantwell, 1993). Responses to open-ended questions (Appendix C) made clear that communication had improved. One assistant principal's comments included statements such as "more frequent," "much better," "memos actually arrived in my mailbox," "this year I have access to the principal everyday," and "I feel more valued and that my input is appreciated," The other assistant principal noted that "The present principal . . . has shared, discussed, and informed us (myself and the other AP) regarding all issues in education. It was difficult, initially, to get accustomed to the volume being provided." The same assistant principal stated that "It is amazing how, in one year, you can go from being kept in the dark regarding many aspects of school and administrative life to feeling part of a team." These responses give clear support for the idea that good, clear, abundant, supportive communication is a crucial element in the building of an effective administrative team.

Outcome number four might have been difficult to assess, dealing, as it does, with how assistant principals perceive their own growth towards professional efficacy. However, the instrument applied at the end of the practicum (Appendix D) yielded highly positive results, with only one assistant principal offering one response as low as "3 – moderately" in relation to item "n," contributing "to regional events appropriately." The assistant principal explained this. In response to open-ended question "b" (see Appendix C) having to do with communication with regard to regional meetings and initiatives, the assistant principal commented that there is often too much catching up to do after having been away from the school. The assistant principal noted that although it was not possible to "attend as many regional events/initiatives as would be desirable, it is gratifying to know that these events are happening." The questionnaire, using a Likert Scale with a range of one to five, five being the highest, concludes with five very important statements (items "p" to "t", Appendix D) relating to professional efficacy. Both assistant principals recorded "5 – greatly" in response to these items, making it clear and incontrovertible that, through the course of the practicum, they had come to feel valued, see themselves as learners and leaders, see themselves as members of a team, and enjoy a sense of professional efficacy.

In summary, compared to one year previous, the assistant principals noted improved communication, increased knowledge of school operations and system events and initiatives, and they experienced a reduction in job ambiguity. At the end of the 12-week practicum, the assistant principals reported increased professional efficacy and developed a team approach to learning and problem-

solving that caused them to experience and increase in job satisfaction in the context of collegial collaboration.

Recommendations

This practicum project has resulted in a number of recommendations with regard to the efficacious functioning of assistant principals:

1. Maintain strong communication among school-based administrators.
2. Develop clear areas of responsibility and categorize those responsibilities in a structured way using headings that make sense.
3. Administrators should empower each other through collegial collaboration, and they need to avoid isolation.
4. Give encouragement to assistant principals to participate in events and meetings that occur outside the school, but understand that there are situations when the in-school setting can require all of their time.
5. Provide opportunities for the leadership team to meet away from the site in order to develop plans for improvement without interruption or distraction – one assistant principal in particular commented on the value of the usefulness of this approach if it is used sparingly and in an organized way. (This was the one major recommendation coming from the assistant principals themselves.)

The action-core of all these recommendations is the development of processes and procedures for consistent, reliable, meaningful communication. Once appropriate levels of communication become a "given," collegial collaboration leading towards efficacy becomes achievable.

Dissemination

The Board that employs the writer is a new system that has evolved from the amalgamation of three smaller boards three years ago, and it is still in the process of implementing its strategic plan. The Director of Human Resources for the Board has received the job descriptions (Appendix E) that were collaboratively developed by the assistant principals and the writer. He has stated (Appendix F) that "One of the first steps in the development of the format for performance appraisals will be a review of job descriptions of all job classifications. With your permission, I will use the job descriptions for the Assistant Principals that you have developed as part of your practicum as a start point for that job classification." This means that dissemination of one aspect of this practicum will begin during the 1998-1999 school year.

Beyond this very concrete aspect of dissemination, the writer plans to distill the major results of the practicum and develop an article from it and seek to have it published. The writer views this as an important goal because the literature supports the view that the problem addressed in this practicum is wide-spread, and solutions, also supported by the literature, that were developed and implemented in this practicum to remedy the problem can (and in the writer's view should) be replicated by other principals in other settings.

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Appendix A

A/P's Meeting Log: Name _____ Week (1-12) _____

For each meeting, indicated whether or not you attended it with "A" for attended,

"D" for did not attend, and "P" for managed to attend part of the meeting.

Under the "Worth It" column, simply write yes or no for each meeting attended.

DATE	TOPIC(S) OF MEETING	ATTENDED	WORTH IT
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Appendix B

A/P's Communication Log: Name _____ Week (1-12) _____

Please describe each communication from the principal over a 12 week period.

Indicate the value of each communication on a scale of 1 to 5.

Ratings having the values that follow.

Waste of time not useful useful very useful essential

1 2 3 4 5

DATE	TYPE OF COMMUNICATION	TOPIC	RATING
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Appendix C

Questions on Principal-Assistant Principal Communication after 12 Weeks

Please provide short answers (up to one page each) to the questions that follow.

- a. Compared to one year ago, is it your impression that communication from the principal has improved in quantity?
- b. Compared to one year ago, is it your impression that communications from the principal notifying/inviting/encouraging/asking you to participate in the regional events/initiatives have been more numerous?
- c. Compared to one year ago, what is your impression of the quality of the communication from the principal?
- d. Compared to one year ago, how would you describe your communication with the principal in the context of your active participation and as one who initiates communication?
- e. What are your recommendations for improving communication between yourself and the principal?

Appendix D

Assistant Principal's Summative Questionnaire

Choose the number of the descriptor that most closely reflects your response and place it in the space to the left of the statement.

Descriptors

Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Very much	Greatly
1	2	3	4	5

Statements

In my work, compared to one year ago, I

- _____ a. understand better specific aspects of my job as assistant principal.
- _____ b. feel more self-assured in the roles I fulfill as assistant principal.
- _____ c. feel more knowledgeable with regard to school system events.
- _____ d. work more as part of an in-school administrative team.
- _____ e. participate meaningfully in decisions that affect the school.
- _____ f. engage in meaningful communication initiated by the principal.
- _____ g. experience a sense of professional development.
- _____ h. feel I have a level of access to the principal that is satisfactory.
- _____ i. am consulted by the principal regularly and appropriately.
- _____ j. am able relate to staff from a position of strength.
- _____ k. feel confident that I have the support of the principal.
- _____ l. have confidence that my opinions are valued by the principal.
- _____ m. have confidence that my decisions are supported by the principal.
- _____ n. contribute to regional events appropriately.
- _____ o. believe I have an understanding of the work that the principal does.

- _____ p. know my strengths are recognized and utilized.
- _____ q. work as part of an administrative team towards continuous improvement.
- _____ r. am part of a learning environment and am myself encouraged to be a self-directed learner.
- _____ s. am part of an administrative team that treats mistakes as learning opportunities.
- _____ t. experience a sense of personal, professional efficacy.

Appendix E – Job Descriptions

_____ Regional School Board Assistant Principal Job Descriptions

Belief Statement of Board

The _____ Regional School Board believes that the role of the Assistant Principal is an encompassing one that is intended to fulfill two overall goals, namely,

- 1) it is the role of the assistant principal to support and assist the principal in carrying out the leadership function of the school by assuming reasonable duties as assigned by the principal and supervisory staff of the Board;
- 2) it is the role of the assistant principal to facilitate liaison among the school-based professional and support staff, students, parent community, extracurricular leaders, and the principal.

In order to be effective, it is important that the assistant principal be involved in all aspects of school operation and that there are direct lines of communication among all affected parties working in settings pertaining to the School Administration Team and the Regional Leadership Team of the Board.

Specific Aspects of School Operation – Middle/Junior High Assistant Principal

The Middle/Junior High Assistant Principal at _____, under the jurisdiction of the _____ Regional School Board, has supervisory involvement in the areas that are described herein.

Staff Leadership

- describe, consult with respect to, and recommend teaching assignments
- evaluate teaching and oversee support staff evaluation as required

- help organize staff professional development
- serve as a sounding board for staff concerns
- provide liaison with support staff
- advise staff as appropriate
- assist with hiring of staff
- communicate (orally, in writing, electronically) with all staff, including support staff
- facilitate and participate in staff/team meetings
- assist with the scheduling of field trips, guest speakers, and class trips
- hire substitute teachers
- help arrange coverage of classes

Program Services and Management

- order texts and other resources
- maintain budget oversight as required
- coordinate, support, and supervise in-school curriculum development and implementation
- provide guidance for and contribute to middle level program initiatives
- prepare exam schedules and invigilation schedules
- oversee adherence to Department of Education guidelines, including A_____ Provinces Educational Foundation initiatives
- attend Regional Board Programs and Services meetings
- disseminate to staff curriculum information and directives from Department of Education and Regional Office

- collaborate with school-based administrative team concerning the development, offering, and scheduling of approved courses

School Organization

- project middle/junior enrollments
- organize middle/junior class/section sizes
- develop schedules and timetables
- prepare middle/junior class lists
- set up and maintain administrative computer data bases and systems
- prepare supervision schedules
- organize and supervise the flow of information provided daily to the school community, including announcements
- oversee hall/grounds supervision
- develop expertise in basic equipment maintenance

Student Services

- assist students with course registration
- assist resource teachers develop case loads, including IPP, IMP management
- monitor attendance
- advise and counsel parents concerning students' difficulties
- facilitate extracurricular and co-curricular activities
- take care of sick/injured students
- ensure that sound and fair disciplinary practices are followed
- deal directly with serious disciplinary infractions
- provide oversight of locks and lockers

- oversee provision of appropriate student transportation
- supervise required standardized testing
- maintain a lost and found service
- supervise school dances
- address and bring to the attention of appropriate personnel school health and safety issues

Public Relations

- prepare Orientation for incoming students
- schedule/coordinate Parent-Teacher meetings
- contact and meet with parents as required
- send honors lists to media for publication
- deal with media on middle/junior projects
- write newsletter reports
- facilitate/moderate June closings

Regional Liaison

- attend Regional meetings as appropriate
- attend professional development programs and events
- maintain communication with colleague administrators
- serve as appropriate on Regional/System committees
- prepare and submit Regional and Department reports as appropriate and required

Principal Support

- represent the principal at meetings when the principal is unable to attend

- participate with the principal in long-range planning
- prepare for and attend suspension meetings
- communicate daily with the principal to help the principal to be informed
- provide the principal with data and information required for response to inquiries from the Regional Board Office
- offer advice regarding staff development, student programs, the efficient management of school procedures, and the allocation of resources

Specific Aspects of School Operation – Senior High Assistant Principal

The Senior High Assistant Principal at _____, under the jurisdiction of the _____ Regional School Board, has supervisory involvement in the areas that are described herein.

Staff Leadership

- describe, consult with respect to, and recommend teaching assignments
- evaluate teaching and oversee support staff evaluation as required
- help organize staff professional development
- serve as a sounding board for staff concerns
- provide liaison with support staff
- advise staff as appropriate
- assist with hiring of staff
- communicate (orally, in writing, electronically) with all staff, including support staff
- advise staff of career opportunities and possible changes in job assignment

- help staff understand Department of Education requirements, Board policies, and N_____ Teachers Union (N___ U) articles
- assist staff in their efforts to communicate with Department of Education, Regional School Board, and the N_____ Teachers Union
- participate in committees at the school/community level such as Occupational Health and Safety, and School Advisory Council
- give assistance to staff members in conflict with one another
- call substitute teachers
- inform staff of student suspensions
- cover classes as appropriate for teachers engaged in Professional Development Program Services and Management
- order texts and other resources
- manage all textbook orders for the school
- maintain budget oversight as required
- coordinate, support, and supervise in-school curriculum development and implementation
- prepare exam schedules and invigilation schedules
- oversee adherence to Department of Education guidelines, including A_____ Provinces Educational Foundation initiatives
- attend Regional Board Programs and Services meetings
- disseminate to staff curriculum information and directives from Department of Education and Regional Office

- collaborate with school-based administrative team concerning the development, offering, and scheduling of approved courses
- assist staff with the development and publication of course descriptions for high school credit offerings
- help organize staff professional development days
- encourage and supervise school-based curriculum innovation and implementation
- hire substitutes for teachers engaged in curriculum development initiatives

School Organization

- maintain computer data bases
- project senior enrollments
- develop schedule of senior classes/lists
- provide senior homeroom assignments
- oversee development of senior course registrations, teaching assignments, and class teaching lists
- develop and assign class rosters
- prepare supervision schedules
- order/provide sufficient desks
- participate in development of school calendar
- organize and supervise the flow of information provided daily to the school community, including announcements
- meet with parents with regard to student pre-registration after second semester has gotten underway and planning for coming year has begun

Student Services

- assist students with course registration
- assist resource teachers develop case loads, including IPP, IMP management
- monitor attendance
- advise and counsel parents concerning students' difficulties
- facilitate extracurricular and co-curricular activities
- take care of sick/injured students
- ensure that sound and fair disciplinary practices are followed
- deal directly with serious disciplinary infractions
- provide oversight of locks and lockers
- oversee provision of appropriate student transportation
- supervise required standardized testing
- make arrangements of a lost and found service
- supervise school dances
- address and bring to the attention of appropriate personnel school health and safety issues

Public Relations

- prepare Orientation for incoming students
- schedule/coordinate Parent-Teacher meetings
- contact and meet with parents as required
- send honors lists to media for publication
- deal with media on senior projects
- write newsletter reports

- facilitate/moderate June closings

Regional Liaison

- attend Regional meetings as appropriate
- attend professional development programs and events
- maintain communication with colleague administrators
- serve as appropriate on Regional/System committees
- prepare and submit Regional and Department reports as appropriate and required

Principal Support

- represent the principal at meetings when the principal is unable to attend
- participate with the principal in long-range planning
- prepare for and attend suspension meetings
- communicate daily with the principal to help the principal to be informed
- provide the principal with data and information required for response to inquiries from the Regional Board Office
- offer advice regarding staff development, student programs, the efficient management of school procedures, and the allocation of resources

Preparation for the Principalship

The Assistant Principal is responsible to develop various aspects of expertise that give the Assistant Principal the competencies required to assume duties required by the Principal. It is important that the Assistant Principal be able with experience to fulfill the duty of Principal should the need arise. To achieve this outcome, it is vital that there is a team approach to the administration of each

school so that administrators contribute to and benefit from the synergy that is derived from collaboration and collegial leadership.